(b) whether any action has been taken against the factory owner, if so; the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) An accident took place at M/s Century Rayon Shahad District Thane, Maharashtra on March 17, 1993 due to the failure of the Spinbath Recirculation System and consequent overflow of the Spinbath Storage tanks containing hazardous substances. This sudden failure of the process was due to the tripping in the Captive Power Supply and failure in the automatic switch over to grid. Highly acidic effluent containing toxic substances was released from the factory in the open drain which caused the death of 10 persons and left 122 persons injured.

(b) The Government has taken the following actions against the offending industrial unit;

(i) Executive President, Senior Vice President, General Manager (Operations) and Senior Manager (Safety, Health and Environment) of the factory were arrested under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

(ii) Orders have been issued by the State Government under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for closure of the Spinbath Unit involved in accident until measures on Safety are implemented to the satisfaction of the Government.

(iii) Directions have been issued to the District Collector, Thane for providing immediate relief to the victims of the accident under the provisions of the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991.

(c) Does not arise.

Lifting the ban on the export of wild and endangered plants etc.

1704. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the recent lifting of the ban on the export of wild and endangered plants land and timber for commercial purposes is in contravention of the Wildlife Protection Act and the spirit of the Biodiversity Convention signed by Government at Rio in 1992; and

(b) what steps Government intend to take to save the endangered flora and fauna of the country from destruction for temporary commercial gain?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The ban on the export of wild and endangered plant species and timber for commercial purposes to the extent applicable earlier has not been lifted. The export policy of wildife products are inter alia subject to wild life (Protection) Act also. The various measures taken by Government to save endangered flora and fauna of the country include:—

(i) A net work of protected areas have been established in the country.

(ii) The Wild Life (Protection) Act has been comprehensively amended to provide better protection to the wild heritage of India and the punishments for violations of the act have been made more stringent.

(iii) The State Governments are extended financial assistance in their efforts of protection and conservation of wildlife in the country.

(iv) Commercial exploitation of forest produce from protected areas is banned.